

Canadian  
amphlets  
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Ontario. Immigration Office  
The great province of Ontario.  
Brantford [1879?]



CANADA.

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THE GREAT  
**Province of Ontario.**

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ITS CLIMATE AND PRODUCTS.

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Published by Authority of the Government of the Province of  
Ontario.



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EXPOSITOR PRINT, BRANTFORD, ONTARIO.



# CANADA.

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## The Great Province of Ontario.

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### ITS CLIMATE AND PRODUCTS.

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#### EXTENT OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

The Dominion of Canada, the most promising field in the whole world, for emigration, embraces an area of nearly four million square miles and is therefore as large as either Europe or the United States. It extends over as many degrees of latitude as there are between London and Calcutta, and measures a length of three thousand six hundred miles from Cape Breton in the east to Alaska in the north-west. From south to north it reaches from the parallel of 42—the latitude of Rome in Italy—to its northern limits in the islands off the northern coast, or across a breadth of 2,700 miles. It is washed by three great oceans. In the grandeur of its physical features the Dominion is surpassed by no country on the face of the globe. Immense mountain ranges, vast plains of forest covering millions of square miles and furnishing a practically exhaustless supply of wealth, fertile prairies large enough in themselves to form a mighty empire, great rivers, many of them larger than the Danube, and countless lakes, some as large as European Kingdoms—all these are imposing characteristics of Canada, the greater portion of whose territory is yet awaiting settlement.

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## THE CLIMATES OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA.

In a territory so vast wide differences of climate must prevail. The summer climate of France extends over a breadth of several hundred miles from New Brunswick into British Columbia, and north of this a similar belt enjoys a summer as warm as that of England, but drier. The wheat belt which has a narrow limit on the Atlantic, extends towards the west, far northward, reaching the sixtieth parallel in the Mackenzie River Valley, while barley ripens on the Arctic circle. On the great plains east of the Rocky Mountains, the grain belt covers a breadth of over one thousand miles. The winters also vary greatly, though almost everywhere they are cold. In the Maritime Provinces they are mitigated by the Atlantic, and in Ontario by the neighborhood of the great lakes and by the southern latitude. In Manitoba and the whole north-west, excepting a district bordering on the Rocky Mountains, the frost is intense, but owing to the dryness of the atmosphere is not only endurable, but during most of the season is actually enjoyable. In Vancouver Island and on the British Columbian coast, owing to the presence of Kuro Siwo or Gulf Stream of the Pacific, which favorably affects the far interior prairies of the Saskatchewan, the winters are as mild as in the south of England and more equable. The summers are cool, resembling those of northern England, but on the higher lands of the interior they are hot while the winters are cold. The northern shores of Canada from Labrador to the mouth of the Mackenzie possess an inhospitable climate, and will never sustain more than a very scanty population.

### THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

The Province of Ontario is not only from its position, resources and water power, likely to continue to be the workshop for the manufacturers of the Dominion, but it possesses a climate superior to that of any other Canadian Province and not inferior to the most favored climates in America. It extends from south to north over a distance of seven hundred miles, or from the parallel of forty-two degrees—that of Rome—to the parallel of fifty-two degrees on James Bay, a latitude still south of that of Birmingham. From near the mouth of the Ottawa in the east to the Lake of the Woods in the west it measures a length of nearly 1,100 miles. The area embraced within its very irregular boundaries is about 200,000 square miles—a territory 80,000 square miles larger than the United Kingdom, 1,700 square miles larger than France, equal to the combined areas of Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal and Italy and only 12,000 square miles smaller than the whole German Empire. The southern extremity lies as far south as the extreme northern part of Ohio and Pennsylvania, and leaves in a more northern latitude nearly the whole of New York, Michigan and the New England States. The parallel which cuts the extreme south of the Province passes through the north of Portugal and Spain and the center of Italy and Turkey, leaving Greece the only country in Europe entirely in a more southern latitude than Ontario. Along the extensive southern and western border of the Province, tempering both the summer and winter climates, lie those vast inland seas, Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Superior, the last alone larger than the whole of Scotland. These lakes with the rivers and canals connected with them form a system of inland navigation unsurpassed in the world.

The Laurentian Mountains, which run from east to west northward of the great lakes and rivers draining into them, naturally divide the Province into two sections, the southern and larger one which comprises an area of about 130,000 square miles, containing a



population of two millions, and affording abundant room for many millions more. This large territory embraces an immense extent of fertile land on which are cultivated all the grains of the temperate zone and several products of the tropics. It is a land of fruit, and produces abundant crops of grapes, peaches, apples, tomatoes, melons, and dozens of other fruits. The more northern districts abound in valuable pine forests, and deposits of gold, silver, iron, copper and other valuable minerals which contribute largely to the wealth of the country. The climate varies according to latitude, elevation or position with reference to the great lakes, but is everywhere adapted in a very high degree to grain and fruit growing and to the development of physical well-being. In the extreme north-western part—between the Lake of the Woods and Lake Superior—the warmth of summer and the bright and bracing but intense cold of winter approximate the climate of the Province of Manitoba adjoining to the west. Along Lake Superior, however, the open waters of that vast reservoir, greatly temper the frost of winter and reduce the summer heat almost to English coolness. In the extreme east, between the rivers Ottawa and St. Lawrence, the lake influence is not greatly felt and the winters are cold, steady, bright and pleasant, while the summers are decidedly hot. In climate, this section resembles Montreal and the northern part of the neighboring state of New York. The large lake district enjoys milder winters and summers varying from those of Southern France and Northern Italy to those of Paris. This district, with Eastern Ontario, includes almost the whole population of the Province, and besides a large number of “free grant” townships, several thousand square miles awaiting survey. To the north and west, however, settlers are pushing, and several thousands have already found homes in the Province beyond the great triangle formed by the Ottawa River and the Lakes.

#### BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT LAKES.

The lake influence is very marked at all seasons. The winter isothermal of twenty-five degrees, curves northward from the Highlands of Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario and crossing the Province to Lake Huron north of the forty-third parallel, bends gradually to the south as it leaves the lake region, till in Missouri it reaches the parallel of forty degrees. The winter isothermal of the north shore of Lake Huron is found three hundred miles further south in the Mississippi Valley on the west and two hundred and fifty miles further south in the New England States on the east. Bruce Mines, on the north shore is as mild in winter as Omaha; Niagara as New York City. The contrast with Eastern Ontario is equally well marked. The county of Essex on Lake Erie is as much warmer in winter than Ottawa, as Memphis, Tennessee, is warmer than Essex, yet, the difference in latitude between the two Ontario places is only three degrees or a little over 200 miles, while between Essex and Memphis it is seven degrees or nearly 500 miles. In spring, the winds from the lakes, which heat more slowly than the land, delay the full opening of the season, but not injuriously, because the check given to vegetation till warm weather sets in to the northward as well as to the south, often prevents damage from untimely frosts experienced elsewhere, when plants have advanced to a critical stage. In summer the lake influence is as noticeable as in winter, the lake region being protected from the continental influence which raises the temperature of the Mississippi Valley on the same parallel several degrees higher than in semi-insular Ontario. If spring is delayed by the cold lake winds, ample compensation is afforded in autumn, the lakes, slow to cool after the summer heats, continuing the mellow Fall

weather when the Mississippi Valley in the same latitude is feeling the first rude embraces of winter.

### COMPARATIVE FREEDOM FROM EXTREMES.

Nor is this all the Ontario climate owes to the Great Lakes. Frosts which prevail further south are often prevented and the rapid and sometimes trying changes of temperature characteristic of much of the United States and Canada are here felt only in a modified degree. And not only in regard to annual but also in regard to daily extremes, the lake region is more temperate than any other inland portion of America further north than Mississippi, Alabama or the Carolinas—and east of the Rocky Mountains. The record for two years of the American weather service show that of over one hundred inland stations selected from the western, north-eastern, middle, northern and eastern States and the Canadian Provinces, Ontario stations are the only ones which do not show a change of forty degrees or more in temperature within twenty-four hours. Many of the stations whose records have been examined show such changes from twenty to sixty times in a single year. Even as far south as Texas the mercury has been known to fall within a few hours, from eighty degrees in the shade to fourteen degrees of frost.

### WHAT ONTARIO WINTERS ARE LIKE.

The duration of winter in Ontario is about four months, though it varies a little in different parts. In Eastern Ontario it commences in the latter half of November and closes in the beginning of April. In South-western Ontario it is a few weeks shorter. At Ottawa the mercury falls almost every winter to thirty degrees below zero, or even lower, and the mean of the three mid-winter months is only fifteen degrees above zero. In Toronto the average lowest point reached during the year is twelve degrees below zero, and the mean of December, January and February is nearly twenty-five degrees above zero. At various points on Lake Huron it usually falls little, or not at all, below zero, and in the southern counties the winter mean varies from twenty-five to thirty degrees. Everywhere, however, the season is bright, bracing and pleasant. Sometimes the sky is cloudless for days or weeks together. The occasional extremely cold periods rarely last more than three days, and are almost invariably dry, bright and calm, with a great range of temperature between day and night. The cold is not felt to nearly the extent that people in moister climates would imagine, and a walk of half a mile bare-handed even with the mercury twenty below zero, often causes no unpleasant feeling of cold. In fact that temperature seems no colder than twenty degrees above zero generally does in Britain. The explanation is found in the dryness of the atmosphere not abstracting from the body the heat which would be absorbed by a more humid air. Snow lies on the ground to a depth of from several inches to two or three feet, for greatly varying periods, and except occasionally when snow drifts prove troublesome, the snow covered roads are good and the sledges glide along rapidly to the music of the sleigh bells. The commencement of the sleighing season is hailed with delight, business is revived; the grain is readily marketed, and in fact almost every operation requiring good roads is greatly facilitated. Unfortunately, the whole of Ontario does not deserve the reputation for sleighing which current notices abroad regarding the Canadian winter give it. In Eastern Ontario sleighing usually lasts from three to four months and is depended upon as a prominent feature of every winter. But towards the south-west, the sleighing season gradually



becomes shorter. At Toronto it averages but little more than three weeks, and still further south and west, only a few days. Occasionally winters pass without any sleighing. Temperature is the controlling cause of the existing differences, but not the only one, for on the east side of Lake Huron the mild temperature does not prevent the west winds—elsewhere dry—from gathering moisture from the open waters of the lake and depositing that moisture on the land. The sleighing season over much of the Huron and Georgian Bay district generally lasts nearly three months.

The winter, unfortunately, is not so steadily cold over the whole Province as it is in the eastern and northern parts, where only occasional thaws occur during the height of the season. Over southern and south-western Ontario, in most winters, thawing and freezing weather alternate every few days or weeks, and temperatures of above fifty degrees are reached. In several sections, the normal temperature of mid-day in winter is several degrees above the freezing point. The winters differ in different years. Sometimes ice and snow are absent: ploughing is even carried on in December and January, and in the warmest parts, flowers have bloomed at mid-winter in the open air, and butterflies, snakes and frogs have made their appearance. The coldest year on record in Ontario closed with a day on which a temperature of seventy-one degrees in the shade was reached.

Notwithstanding, however, the drawbacks experienced in the warmer sections from the shortness of the sleighing period and the too frequent mildness of the atmosphere, the winter season everywhere is bright, pleasant and comparatively dry. Owing to the southern latitude of the Province—almost the entire population living further south than Lyons in France—the winter days are much longer than in Britain, a fact which contributes to the cheerfulness of the season.

### SPRING IN ONTARIO.

Spring is almost banished from the cycle of the seasons in Ontario. In the warmer parts it begins sometimes in March; sometimes not till the beginning of April. In the colder districts it bursts forth suddenly in the beginning of the latter month and snow and ice disappear in a freshet of imposing character. Vegetation commences suddenly and progresses with a vigor surprising to people from Britain and Western Europe. The Ottawa country in which the winters are severe soon becomes as warm as South-Western Ontario. Everywhere the beginning or middle of May ushers in the summer, and temperatures of eighty degrees in the shade and sometimes ninety degrees, or even higher, are experienced.

### A LONG AND BEAUTIFUL SUMMER.

The Ontario summer is scarcely surpassed by that of any land. The regular storm rains cease almost entirely from May till September, leaving vegetation to be refreshed by the brief but copious showers which fall in huge drops during the thunder storms which are grand and impressive in a degree unknown in Britain. The skies are Italian in their beauty, of an intense blue and of seemingly immeasurable depth. Sometimes day after day passes of uninterrupted serenity and unclouded azure—more often the blue is intermingled with huge piles of fleecy clouds towering to an immense height and displaying an inexpressibly glorious cloudland, through which the sun sets with a magnificence rarely approached even in Italy. These sunsets more than atone for the short-

ness of the twilight belonging to all southern countries. The nights have all the charm of oriental nights and are rarely uncomfortably warm. Tornados such as are so frightfully destructive of life and property in the Western States, are here very uncommon and scarcely ever attended by fatal results.

The summer season, judged by British standard, is long, usually lasting from the middle of May till near the end of September. It has even been known to extend several weeks into October—in which month shade temperatures of nearly ninety degrees have been recorded. The latter half of May is as warm as a London midsummer and the month of September averages, in some localities, as high as a London July. Under the genial and steady warmth vegetation advances apace. Wheat harvest commences in the most southern parts in the beginning of July: it has even begun in June. In the coolest parts and even on the highest land, 1,500 feet above the sea, it is generally the beginning of August. All the grain crops follow each other in quick succession, and over most of the Province, harvest is fully completed by the third week of August. Maize or Indian corn is gathered late; apples, a very important crop, and peaches are gathered in August and September; grapes, which succeed everywhere, are generally left to the latter month.

Notwithstanding the high average heat of the summer, and the occasional extremely high temperatures recorded, this season is rarely oppressively warm. In some districts ninety-five degrees and even one hundred degrees in the shade are registered even as late as September, but the dryness of the air usually prevents any greater feeling of oppressiveness than is produced in Glasgow by a temperature of eighty or eighty-five degrees. Extreme heat lasts generally only a few days at a time, and the average daily maximum of July varies from seventy-eight degrees in cool sections to eighty-five degrees in the hottest. In the warmest midsummer nights the mercury falls to seventy or seventy-five degrees before morning, and the average nightly minimum of July, even in the warmest parts of the Province, is only a little above sixty degrees. Along the lake shores, a lake breeze by day and a land breeze by night temper the warmth of the season. In several localities a light hoar frost sometimes occurs early in June, but is rarely very injurious. Hoar frosts are again experienced in September, but some sections are usually free from frost from the first of May till October.

#### THE FALL SEASON IN ONTARIO.

Autumn is scarcely less beautiful than summer. In October, the days are of a genial warmth and the nights cool and refreshing. The trees assume a brilliancy of color unknown in Europe, and over the landscape, flashing in crimson, yellow, pink, green and gold, the sun shines with a mellow radiance through the faint, purple mist which fills the atmosphere and imparts to the outlines of every distant object a softness in striking contrast with the distinctness generally noticeable in fine weather during most of the year. Then the autumn winds rise and break from time to time the serenity of nature. The leaves fall, and as November passes, vegetation sinks into its winter rest. Sometimes snow falls in October, but it melts in a few hours. Sometimes the first flakes are not seen until November. This month is often dull and comparatively gloomy, but without fog, though quite as frequently the leaden clouds and the long rains are banished by the genial Indian summer days which make the Canadian autumn celebrated. The small ponds usually receive their first temporary coating of ice, before the end of the month at least, but open, and fine warm weather, in south-western Ontario, in particular, often lasts well into December.

## RAINFALL.

The rainfall in Ontario is less than in the west of England, but greater than in the east. It varies according to locality, from twenty-five to nearly forty inches, and averages for the Province about 32 inches. It is well distributed throughout the year. Although rain is abundant, rainy days are not numerous, heavy showers, sometimes an inch or two in an hour—often taking the place of the gentle rains of Britain. Fogs and drought are uncommon.

### COMPARISONS WITH EUROPEAN CLIMATES.

A few European analogies may be interesting. The summers over most of Ontario are like those of Northern Italy, Southern, Central and Northern France, and as warm in the Ottawa Valley as in most of Southern Ontario. Towards the west they are fully as long as in Vienna. May at Windsor is as warm as in Paris, and September warmer than at either Paris or Vienna. The winters in the settled parts of Ontario vary from the comparative mildness of the same season in Hungary and along the Danube to the cold of Central Russia. The mean temperature along a line from the Danube, through Bucharest to Moscow closely represents at all seasons a line from Windsor near the head of Lake Erie to Pembroke on the Ottawa—Pembroke, however, being warmer than Moscow in winter. Roumania corresponds closely in temperature with South-Western and Central Ontario at all seasons of the year, and Bucharest differs little in either summer or winter from Toronto.

The following table of mean temperatures tell its own story of the long duration and genial warmth of the Ontario summer—and affords interesting points of contrast and similarity between the climate of Ontario and European climates. The figures for Ontario cover five years—1874-78—and are compiled from the records of the meteorological service of Canada. The European figures are from Blodgett, the American meteorologist.

	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.
<b>EUROPE.</b>						
Greenwich.....	54° 1	58° 5	59° 6	62° 7	58° 0	47° 4
York.....	54 5	59 2	62 0	61 1	55 7	48 2
Edinburgh.....	50 3	56 0	58 7	56 8	53 4	48 8
Dublin.....	54 4	60 2	61 5	61 4	56 5	50 1
Paris.....	58 1	62 7	65 6	65 3	60 1	52 2
Bucharest.....	56 3	62 5	68 1	65 2	58 3	49 3
Vienna.....	62 1	67 5	70 7	70 0	61 9	51 2
Berlin.....	56 5	63 3	65 8	64 4	58 4	49 9
Munich.....	57 6	62 1	64 7	64 1	58 1	49 2
<b>ONTARIO.</b>						
Windsor.....	58 1	68 2	73 0	71 1	63 4	50 0
Goderich.....	52 9	64 3	69 2	68 7	61 2	48 5
Hamilton.....	55 5	66 4	73 6	71 3	62 5	49 0
Toronto.....	52 6	62 8	69 0	68 0	59 7	46 5
Cornwall.....	54 1	65 5	70 4	68 9	59 0	45 4



## THE FAR NORTHERN SECTION.

Of the seventy thousand square miles lying north of the Laurentian range and draining into James Bay, a vast projection southward of that great inland sea known as Hudson Bay, little need be said. Cut off from the water communications of the St. Lawrence, penetrated by no railways, and enjoying a less favorable climate than the rest of Ontario, where many thousands of square miles await the advent of the settler, it is yet, and will for years continue, a wilderness of forest and plain, threaded by rivers and dotted with lakes. It contains valuable mineral deposits and a large area of fertile soil, but is at present merely the home of the Indian hunter and the employees of the Hudson Bay Company, whose trading posts are scattered here and there along its coasts and large rivers. The agricultural capacities of the country are by no means inconsiderable, and will no doubt be taken advantage of in the course of years. Barley and oats grow well almost everywhere, while wheat ripens wherever tried, even as far north as the shores of James' Bay. At Moose Factory, on this Bay—latitude  $51^{\circ} 16'$ , almost the same as London, Eng.,—the record of the meteorological service for the two years of observation (the only ones yet published) shows a mean temperature for July of  $63^{\circ} 5'$ , which is higher than that of July in London, and a mean for October of  $43^{\circ}$ . The mean of the year is nearly the same as that of Manitoba and the winter average is slightly higher than at Winnipeg. Garden vegetation, roots and small fruits succeed here, although the springs are backward and variable owing to the prevalence of north winds in spring blowing off the shore ice driven from Hudson Bay into James' Bay to melt there. Inland, on the better and warmer soil which exists there, these winds become greatly modified and the spring season improves. In the southern parts of this northern section, the climate is much milder and resembles that of adjacent parts of the St. Lawrence drainage basin.

## GREAT VARIETY OF PRODUCTIONS.

Apart, however, from the records of temperature, the products of the greater portion of Ontario furnish convincing testimony to the excellence of the climate. Wheat, maize and apples grow in every county and at all elevations. In several southern counties maize is an important crop and yields a heavier average per acre than in Kansas, Missouri or Illinois. Watermelons and tomatoes grow to perfection and the latter so abundantly as to be sold at ten pence a bushel. The egg plant, sweet potato, capsicum and other semi-tropical vegetables are among the common vegetables in some parts. The capsicum grows everywhere. The grape is found flourishing in all parts of the Province as far as agricultural settlements yet extend, and wild varieties on some of the inland rivers hide the trees with their far spreading vines. Grape growing is very profitable in many localities and requires little care. It has yielded as much as \$480 an acre in a single season. The standard varieties never fail to produce a good crop in many districts, and large vineyards are becoming common in several widely separated sections. Even the far-famed Catawba wine is an article of Ontario production, though limited to the very warmest localities. Ontario wines have won diplomas at Paris and elsewhere, and wine making promises to become one of the most important industries. The peach of southern Ontario is equal to any on the continent. The quantities sold are enormous, and the market is rapidly increasing. Peach orchards of from 3,000 to 10,000 trees are numerous. Some varieties of this fruit are grown in the inland counties at an



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elevation of over 1,000 feet above the sea. The apricot, nectarine and quince are easily cultivated over an area of several thousand square miles. At Niagara, which, however, is exceptionally favored in climate, the almond grows out of doors, and the fig is cultivated as a standard with scarcely any protection in winter and ripens two crops in the year. The almond and fig will probably never be grown for profit, but the fact of their cultivation out of doors is a striking evidence of the mildness of the winter climate of the southern counties. Sorghum or the Chinese sugar cane will succeed over very many counties ; and in Southern Ontario hundreds of acres are planted with this crop. Among the trees growing wild in Southern Ontario are the mulberry, the African tamarack, the tall and beautiful tulip tree, a species of magnolia, and the celebrated papaw tree of Mexico and the Southern States. The list of trees, plants and vegetables of warm climates which here push beyond their usual latitudes into the mild lake climate of Ontario might be greatly extended, but the instances already given will suffice to show the singularly favored position of the Province. All the standard English fruits and vegetables are abundant and of excellent quality. The apples are the finest in America—probably in the world. The grain growing capacity of the soil and climate is so well known as not to require more than mere mention. The healthfulness of the climate is also widely known. Ague and malarial fevers are confined to a few localities, and are nowhere so prevalent as in many of the American States. Take it all in all, **ONTARIO POSSESSES THE FINEST AMERICAN CLIMATE EAST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.**





